

April 6, 2009

**OBEY IN DOUGLAS COUNTY FOR UPDATE ON LOCAL SEWER, WATER
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FEDERAL GRANTS & TO TALK TO STUDENTS** □□□

DOUGLAS COUNTY, WI - Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Douglas County today to be briefed on three local projects being financed by money he secured in the omnibus appropriation bill that was recently signed into law. Obey secured \$750,000 to help the Douglas County Sheriff's Department upgrade its communications system, and \$5 million for local water projects in northern Wisconsin, including over \$1 million being used to help make necessary improvements to the wastewater treatment plants in Superior and Poplar.

The communications upgrade will allow the Sheriff's Department to replace its 25 year old analog system with a modern digital system that will allow better communication both within the department and with other first responders. The water projects are being funded through the Northern Wisconsin Environmental Assistance Program, which Obey created in 2000 to help Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Iron counties finance work for repairing, expanding and upgrading water related infrastructure. Over the last few years, Obey has secured nearly \$40 million for projects under this special authority.

“The basic building blocks for community growth, like access to clean water, good roads, efficient sewers, and effective first responders cost a lot even in the best of times. And these certainly aren't the best times,” Obey said. “So I'm glad we were able to get these dollars to help move these projects along and reduce the burden that would otherwise fall on local property-tax payers.”

Obey, who as Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee was one of the lead authors of President Obama's economic recovery package, also talked to seniors at Superior High School about the economy and economic recovery efforts. “We're facing the greatest economic crunch of our lifetimes,” Obey told the students. “That's why the recovery act was so big. We're trying to fill a three and a half trillion dollar hole in the economy over the next three years; that's roughly what the economists tell us we'll see by way of lost consumer purchases in this economy.”

But the economy won't truly recover until we address its underlying inequality, Obey added, noting that there is no way we can have a strong economy that works for everyone when the

wealthiest one percent of Americans have more money than the bottom ninety percent combined. "That's what led to the crunch we're in today," Obey said. "Since 2001, as worker productivity went up, over 90% of the income growth in the country went to the wealthiest 10% of society. The remaining 90% of Americans have been struggling to sustain their standard of living by borrowing to pay for their houses, for their cars, for their kids' education, and for everything else, and when they couldn't borrow anymore, the bottom fell out."

"Our job now is to rebuild the economy in a way that will enable middle class families to see their income grow again," Obey concluded.

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